Los Alamos Public Schools recommended for accreditation

January 1, 2013

While virtually all high schools in the country are accredited so their students can qualify for admission to a full array of colleges, Los Alamos Public Schools has taken the unusual step of working to obtain accreditation for its entire district. It is one of few in the state to obtain an accreditation recommendation by the internationally recognized AdvancED.

The effort was undertaken as part of the school system's goal to become a "Top 100" school in the country. Such external scrutiny was intended to help everyone involved to better understand their institutional strengths and weaknesses.

"We knew as a school system we had a lot going for us, but we wanted additional perspectives on areas where we needed to do more work," said Gene Schmidt, the school district's superintendent.

In November, an AdvancED team spent three days interviewing students, teachers, staff, stakeholders; observing classrooms; and reviewing documentation. At the end of the review, the team announced that it would recommend the district for accreditation.

Among the strengths the review team recognized were the high expectations for students, faculty, and staff; respectful relations that support student learning; and strong stakeholder engagement.

If the review team's recommendation is accepted by AdvancED, the district will be internationally benchmarked through an official announcement scheduled for January.

"In an increasingly competitive and international landscape, accreditation means we really are preparing our students to the very best of our abilities," said Paula Dean, the schools assistant superintendent. "We're also very thankful to have such a supportive community that really wants our students to succeed."

For more information on the accreditation process, go to http://www.advanc-ed.org/.